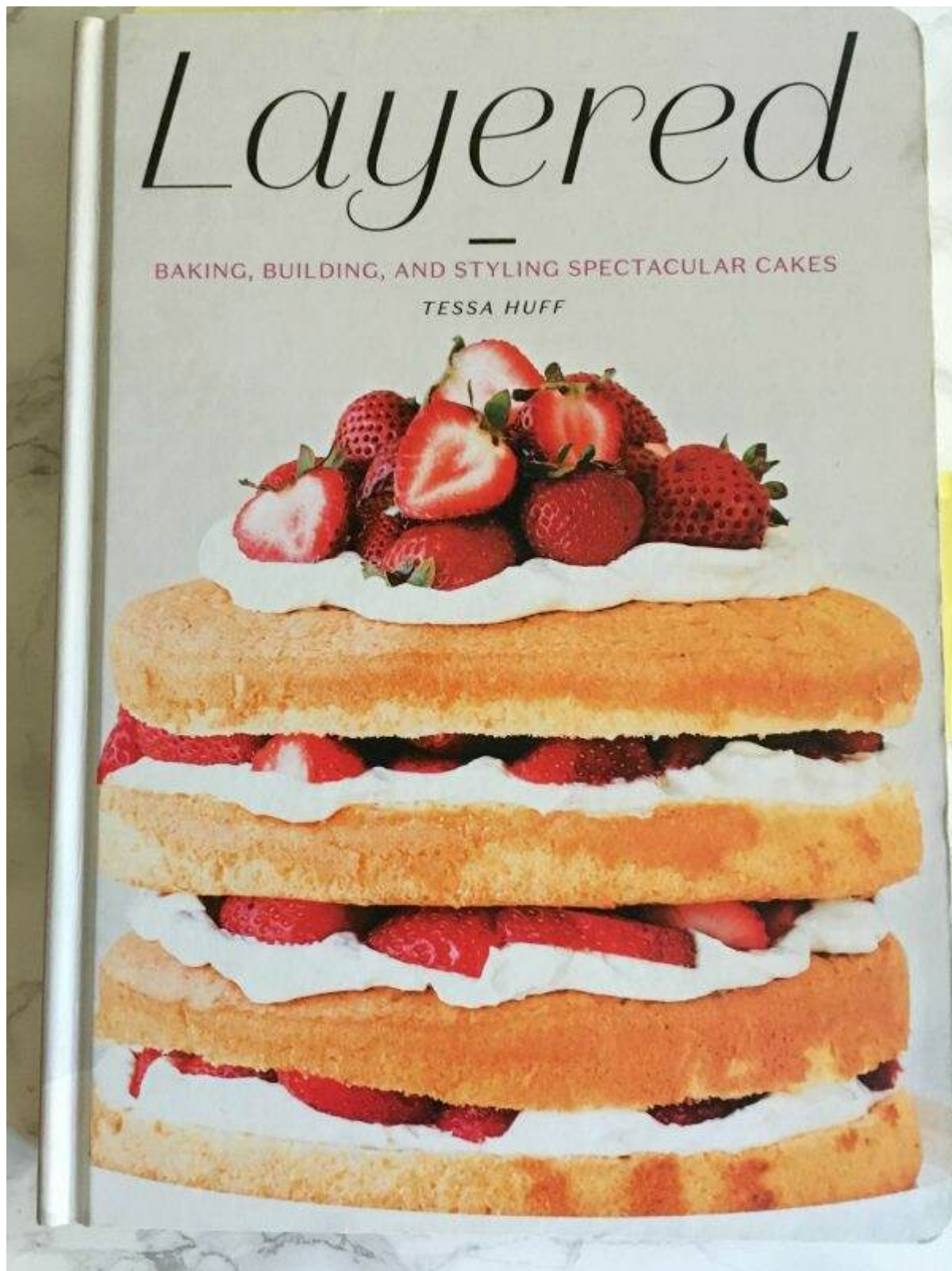


Cakes, Quality Time and Cookbook Giveaway

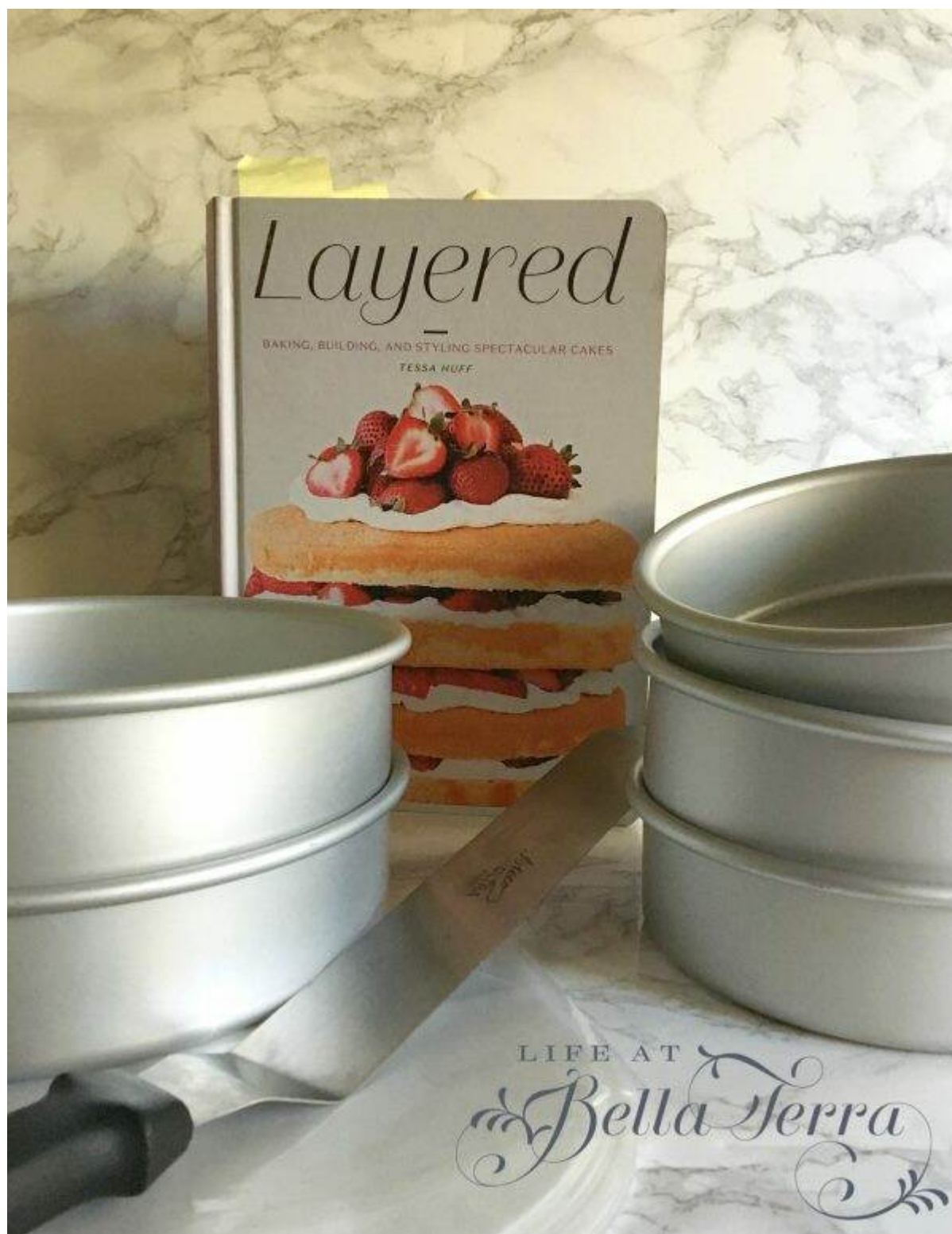
Last summer, I was drawn to a magazine article about a London Fog cake, made with Earl Grey tea by [Tessa Huff](#). I've always wanted to make beautiful cakes but have never really spent much time learning how to do so. I've tried my hand at the occasional home made birthday cake or our yearly Easter lamb cake but nothing that requires me to really stretch my cake baking knowledge.



The London Fog cake article led me to purchase Tessa's beautiful cake cookbook, [Layered](#). I have written about Tessa before, but what started as "let's make this cool cake" has turned into spending quality time with my son and his friends.

When the book arrived, we quickly purchased real cake baking

paraphenalia Tessa recommended~~the correct pans, parchment liners and frosting implements.



This notion of baking cakes took on a life of its own. My foodie son and his friends (all who are extreme athletes and very tall) started showing up in the kitchen to take on the challenge of cake baking. Who would have thought?

The very first cake we made was the Banoffee Tiramisu Cake~~a boozy banana espresso cake. The vanilla espresso chiffon cake is brushed with a rum-soaked espresso, then filled with mascarpone buttercream topped with salted caramel and chocolate curls.



Here are my two cake baking buddies. My son Benjamin is 6'1" and his friend, Max is 6'5". Both are entering their final semester in college and have been friends for years.



LIFE AT
Bella Terra

Tessa's book is filled with so much information on everything from what to stock in your pantry to how to frost a cake. The recipes are in sections-Classic, Chocolate, Casual, Whimsical, Adventurous, and Holiday cakes.

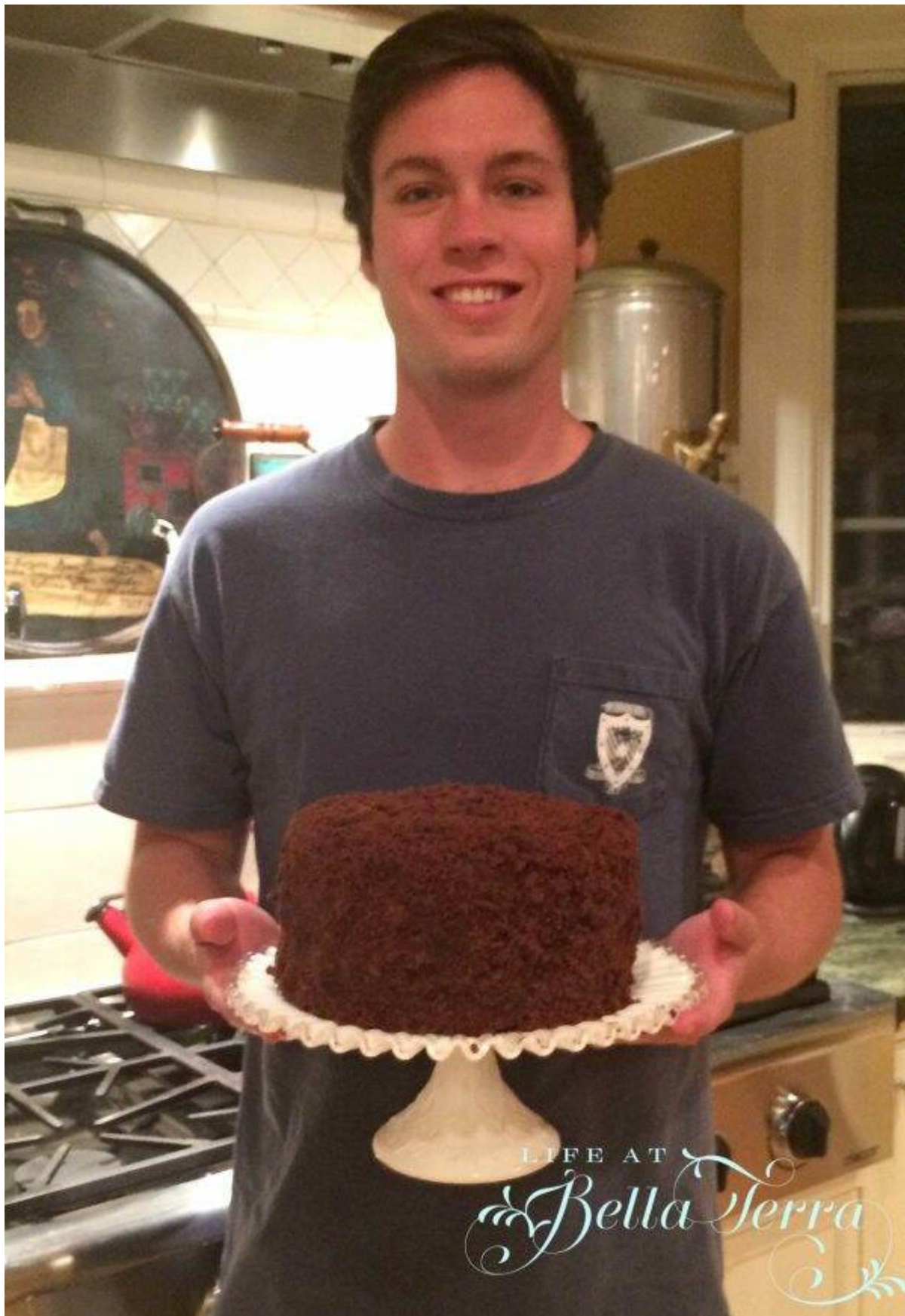
Sweet Tea Cake was our next selection, which was inspired by the food of the South. A lemon butter cake is layered with Sweet Tea Buttercream with a Vanilla Bean Buttercream frosting. It was the first time we have made candied lemons as a garnish.



Piping the frosting was the most difficult part...hard to have a steady hand with a vertical motion.



The next cake was difficult to make and doesn't really look fabulous in my photos, but it is SO delicious! We've made it twice so far. The Brooklyn Blackout Cake is a decadent chocolate cake from Ebinger's Bakery in Brooklyn. Named after World War II blackout drills, this was a staple in Brooklyn until the bakery closed in 1972.



It's a devil's food cake with chocolate custard with a dark chocolate ganache frosting. It's very messy to make because you then cover the entire cake with cake crumbs.



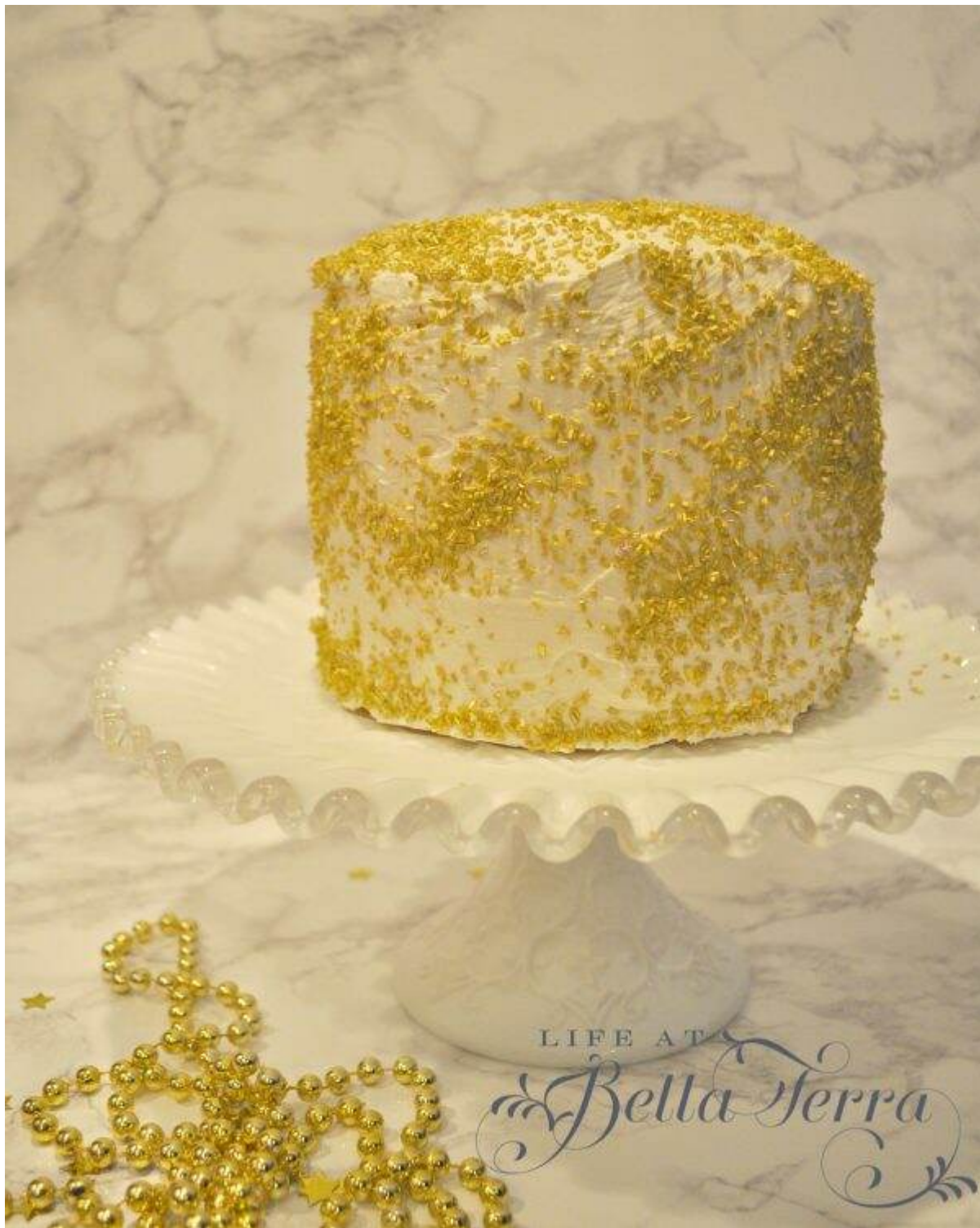
Thanksgiving 2016, we made the Caramel Apple Cake.



Christmas 2016 was the Chocolate Pomegranate Cake.



New Years 2016 was the Golden Champagne Celebration Cake.



Since Benjamin spent the summer in Washington, D.C. we didn't make many cakes but we managed to make this Strawberry Shortcake without him. A perfect summer dessert when the berries are at their best.



Thanksgiving, this year, was the Butterscotch Bourbon Cake.



And our most recent, was the Christmas Cake~~Red Currant Chocolate Cake, a spectacular combination of chocolate, raspberry, red currant and creme de cassis.



As a result of this cookbook, I have enjoyed hours of quality time with our son and his friends in the kitchen, making memories over gorgeous and sometimes challenging recipes.

It is now time for the amazing **giveaway**! I will be giving one new (not sticky and dog-eared) Layered cookbook to the lucky

winner, in hopes they too, will create happy cake memories.

How to enter- please do at least one of the following:

1. Leave a comment below and tell me about your favorite cake(s).
2. Follow me on Instagram (lifeatbellaterra), like me and tag a friend.

The contest will end at midnight on December 31st, 2017. The winner's name will be randomly selected from all the entries.

Have a very happy and safe New Year's holiday!

Mary